

Maslenitsa (Spring Equinox) - 2014

Nick Watson and Dale Frampton

September 4, 2014

1 Offerings

This section describes the offerings made to the various hallows, the Kindred and the attendees of the rite.

- Outdwellers: Ale
- Mati Syra Zemlya: grain
- Fire: Incense
- Well: silver
- Tree: Incense and water from the well
- The Zoryi: vodka (morning), evening (grain), midnight (flowers)
- Gods: Olive oil
- Nature Spirits: Bread
- Ancestors: Bread & salt
- Morana: Honey, bread and salt
- Dažbog: Vodka
- Final Sacrifice: Mead
- Waters of Life: Mead

2 Initiating the Rite

{Speaker}:

On this day, the crossroads of Winter and Spring, we gather to honor the gods who bring forth the blossoming of Springtime. As we bless you, O Bright Ones, bless us in turn as we begin this sacred work in this hallowed space

Insert meditation here

3 Outdwellers

{Speaker}: Moves just outside the perimeter

O fierce whirlwind, O hostile powers, O wicked Bannik! You who reside in the bitter darkness, we make this offering to you. Go from here with the stormy winds and trouble not our holy work. During this sacred time, we now set aside all that separates us from the bliss and blessings of the Holy Ones.

{Speaker}: Leaves ale outside perimeter

4 Purification

{Speaker}: Anoint each participant with water

May you be pure, fit to approach the gods.

5 Honoring the Earth Mother

{Speaker}: Distribute grain to participants

Come to life, come to life, O our Mother, Mati Syra Zemlya! Out of the winter comes the spring, out of barrenness comes abundance. Awaken from your slumber and come dressed in radiance, O our Mother the Earth, bless and uphold our rite! To you we offer this gift with reverent hearts.

{All}: Place grain in the fire

6 Statement of Purpose

{Speaker}:

We are here today to aid winter's transition into spring. In Slavic countries this is known as Maslenitsa, a time for the folk and the kindred to come together in the spirit of merriment and gaiety as winter's harsh rule comes to an end.

We give honor to Morana, the Slavic Goddess of Winter, as she begins her transition to the healing depths of the underworld. There she will rest until it is her time to rule the Earth once more. Through Morana the Earth finds balance in the seasons; the tranquility and repose of the darkness in equilibrium with the warmth and intensity of the light.

We also give honor, strength and power to Dažbog, the Sun God, who is also known as the Giving God. As he assumes his reign life is kindled anew; soon the Earth will be lush in life and color. And as Dažbog renews himself daily, so he renews the Earth - bringing potency and vitality to all living things.

On this day we come to keep the ways of our ancestors, to honor the gods and seek their blessings. We come as one people to make our offerings with love and reverence.

Insert meditation here

7 Recreating the Cosmos

{Speaker}: Moves to the fire

To the flame, with this incense let you be purified and transcend the limits of this world. You are now The Sacred Fire; our connection to the heavens and the gods.

{Speaker}: Sacrifice is placed in the fire. Moves to the well

Cauldron of water, With this silver, let you be purified and transcend the limits of this world. You are now The Sacred Well; our connection to the underworld and our ancestors.

{Speaker}: Silver is placed in the well. Moves to the tree

Mighty tree, with this fire from The Sacred Fire, and water from The Sacred Well, you become The World Tree; that which connects and binds the three worlds together.

Like the tree is rooted in the land, so too do we stand firmly upon it.
Like the tree is encircled by the seas, so too are we encircled by them.
Like the tree dwells beneath the sky, so too do we live beneath it.

Once again we remember our place in the three realms, and await the coming forth of the kindred

8 Opening the Gates

{Speaker}: Addressing the Gatekeeper

I call to the Zoryi, the daughters of Dažbog, the sisters that watch the gate from which the sun leaves at dawn and enters at dusk.

Greetings Zorya Utrennaya, the morning star. We ask you who guards palace gate at dawn; you who opens it to allow the sun to traverse the sky, accept this sacrifice and make this fire a gate.

Greetings Zorya Vechernyaya, the evening star. We ask you who guards the palace gate at dusk; you who closes it once the sun has left the sky, accept this sacrifice and make this tree a gate.

Greetings Zorya Polunochnaya, midnight star. We ask you who watches over the world in the dark of the night, accept this sacrifice and make this well a gate.

{Speaker}: Places the offering into the fire

Let the gates be opened!

{All}:

Let the gates be opened!

9 Inviting the Kindred

9.1 Inviting the Gods

{Speaker}:

Dobro požalovat Bogi i Bogini.

Welcome Gods and Goddesses.

We make space at our fire for the Gods and Goddesses of our people, and the gods of this land.

Bogi i Bogini, accept this sacrifice of oil.

{Speaker}: Pours offering into the fire

You who nurture our spirits, you who challenge us to grow, you who we return to when we pass from this world.

{Speaker}: Call

We remember you.

{All}: Response

We honor you.

Repeat Call/Response for a total of 3 times

9.2 Inviting the Nature Spirits

Dobro požalovat Lesovík.

Welcome woodland spirits.

We make space at our fire for the spirits of this land, of its plants and trees, its birds and beasts and its waters.

Lesovík, accept this sacrifice of bread, and lead us not astray as we walk through the world.

{Speaker}: Places offering next to the Tree

You who have dwelled in this land before man, who protect it, who nurture it.

{Speaker}: Call

We remember you.

{All}: Response

We honor you.

Repeat Call/Response for a total of 3 times

9.3 Inviting the Ancestors

{Speaker}:

Dobro požalovat predki.

Welcome Ancestors.

We make space at our fire for our mighty ancestors, for our honored ancestors, and for our beloved ancestors.

Predki, accept this traditional offering of bread and salt.

{Speaker}: Places offering next to the Well

You who are of our blood and bone, you who are of our spirit and heart, you who have walked this world and left it before us.

{Speaker}: Call

We remember you.

{All}: Response

We honor you.

Repeat Call/Response for a total of 3 times

10 Key Offerings

The corn dolly is laid on a bed of pine boughs. Each offering is placed next to the corn dolly.

{Speaker}:

Morana, Morana, the green boughs shall bear you up, the white shroud shall clothe you as you make your journey. O Ancient Grey Lady, may deep rest restore you, transform and sustain you as you travel forth. The underworld lands will receive you rejoicing, their Queen is returning - Earth Mother is singing, the winter is fading. Lady Morana, dark Goddess of Winter, three gifts do we give in your honor; honey to sweeten you, bread to strengthen you, and salt to preserve you.

Morana, accept our sacrifice!

{All}:

Morana, accept or sacrifice!

{Speaker}:

The shining King, Dažbog, has come to assume his throne!
Come forth girded in strength, enter!
Come forth in your gleaming robes, enter!
Come forth in your brilliant chariot, enter!
O Dažbog, Conquering Sun, your renown is carried to the heavens, enter!
Pierce the clouds and free the winter-bound Earth. Hear us, Gift-Lord, Bestower
of Plenty - we give you honor and welcome!
Dažbog, accept our sacrifice!

{All}:

Dažbog, accept our sacrifice!

*While the speaker talks, an assistant carries the straw dolly on its pine bed around the
grove and stops before the fire.*

{Speaker}:

Morana, Queen of Winter, now it is time for you to go home; the way is open,
your throne in the underworld awaits you. Take from us the bread and salt,
and put on the white garment; the waters below will restore you. The world is
waking from its rest, and now you must depart - may she who has renewed the
earth herself be renewed!

The assistant places the dolly and her bed into the fire.

{Speaker}:

We bid farewell to Morana as she journeys to the underworld. Winter is over
and spring has begun!

11 Prayer of Sacrifice

{Speaker}:

Kindred, we welcome you amongst us. Through each ritual, each prayer, we
grow closer to you . Accept this final offering, let it rise up, and with it, our
words to your ears.

{Speaker}: Places offering into the fire

Kindred, accept our offering.

12 The Omen

{Mary to take the omen}:

13 Calling for the Blessings

{Speaker}:

O kindred, we have made you welcome at our fire, we have honored you, and we have gifted you with sacrifices. From the oracle, we have heard your blessings, and we seal our relationship with a feast.

14 Hallowing the Blessings

{Speaker}: Blessing the blini

In Slavic countries Maslenitsa is celebrated with blini, a symbol of the returning sun.

Dažbog, we ask a blessing on the blini that have been made in your honor. Grant strength, good health, happiness, peace and abundance for us and the whole world. So be it!

{Speaker}: Blessing the eggs

Since ancient times the egg has been a symbol of birth and rebirth. Among Slavic peoples there is a belief that the fate of the world depends upon pysanky - the decorated eggs. As long as the custom of egg decorating continues, the world will exist. Should the custom cease, so will the Earth. We have kept the tradition as our ancestors did, and as our children will after us. We now ask the blessings of the gods upon these eggs, that we and all of the Earth may blossom and thrive! So be it!

{Speaker}: Blessing the mead

Kindred, let your blessings flow into this mead, the preserved bounty of former years, the captured sunshine and essences of flowers. Bless this drink and let it fortify us.

Behold the shared feast between us and the kindred!

15 Affirming the Blessings

{Assistants}: pass the feast to the participants:

{Speaker}:

We have received the Waters of Life and the Blessing of the kindred. And with this blessing, may you be sound and unhurt, weathering all ills with health and good cheer.

> Let us eat and reflect on the blessings of the Kindred.

16 Workings

No planned workings

17 Thanking the Kindred

{Speaker}:

For a time wintery storms may hide the Sun, but the spring has come - the sunlight bursts out again in all its glory, and the Sun God once more goes forth conquering and to conquer. Take these blessings into your lives and work. But first let us give thanks to those who have aided us this day Morana and Dažbog, we thank you for sharing our fire, and may we appreciate the change in the seasons that you herald.

Gods of our people, gods of this place, we thank you for sharing our fire, and may our relationship with you continue to deepen.

Woodland spirits, we thank you for sharing our fire, may you continue to nurture the land as it is reborn.

Ancestors, we thank you for sharing our fire, and may our actions in this world bring honor to you.

18 Closing the Gates

{Speaker}:

As our rite draws to a close, we again turn to the Zoryi to assist us in closing the gates.

{Speaker}: Moves to the tree

Let this gate return to a tree.

{Speaker}: Moves to the well

Let this gate return to a cauldron.

{Speaker}: Moves to the fire

Let this gate return to the fire.

Let the gates be closed!

{All}:

Let the gates be closed!

19 Thanking the Earth Mother

{Speaker}:

We thank the moist mother earth Mati Syra Zemlya for always being here with us today and the days to come. When the time comes for melting snow may she keep our plows ready and our fields fertile. May she watch over us, for some of our journeys may find us alone in a forest with only her moist warm earth beneath us and her soft sweet voice all around us. We shall always honor and thank her for all she does even when not asked.

20 Closing the Rite

{Speaker}:

Our celebration has come to an end but remember the kindred are always with us. As spring renews the Earth, let it also renew our faith. As long as fire burns somewhere there is always hope.

Thank you to all who were with and joined us today. Have a happy Maslenitsa.

Much of this ritual has been borrowed from Slavic Spring Equinox (Maslenitsa) Rite written by Christine Jacocks and available at <https://www.adf.org/members/kins/slavic/rites/maslenitsa.html>.

End of Rite